

The impact of violence in video games on the youth research paper examples

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



Video games are one of the most prominent mediums of entertainment for modern youth. The growing prevalence of violent content in video games has been a cause of concern among sections of the society. The subject has been researched extensively and it has been found that video games can have both, a positive as well as negative impact on the mind and behavior of players.

Gee (2007) defines video gaming as a “ proactive production of story elements, a visual-motoric-auditory-decision-making symphony, and a unique real-virtual story which produces a new form of performance art co-produced by players and designers”. Gee goes on to say that when people learn to play video games, they are simply learning new literacies, especially when learners are learning actively and critically. Video games generated nearly 67 billion dollars in 2012 worldwide. While the United States has consistently been the biggest consumer of video games, other countries are experiencing tremendous growth in the gaming market. China, Brazil, and India are leading the way in 2013 with no slowdown in site. Video game sales are predicted to reach 82 billion by 2017 worldwide .

A strong research base exists that reveals that video games do have a concrete impact on the cognition and behavior of those who play them. There are four theories that inform Gee’s Video Game Theory . Each has characteristics that relate to emerging interest in using games in learning. The first theory, behaviorism, includes elements of self-teaching, direct instruction, imitation, and modeling which can all be experienced in video game play. Second, cognitivism is based on memory and learning and reacting from past experiences. Motor skills and attitudes are also reflected

in various video games which users experience. The third theory, humanism, is apparent in many video games because players value their time and energy and the goal is develop more skills that can be utilized somehow in life. And finally constructivism allows players of video games to create their own worlds based on their real experiences.

As children learn from what they see and experience in video games, the content of gaming titles has been the cause of much debate. The extent and degree of violent content in a video game has been a crucial factor influencing its popularity, with the most violent games also being the most popular . As a result, game shave become increasingly violent over the past two decades. Even though the gaming industry was forced to assign ratings to the titles being sold, this does not prevent children from buying games rated for older audiences. In fact, gaming companies are now free to produce extremely violent games with sexual content as long as it has relevant ratings assigned to them .

Research has shown that playing violent video games has an impact not only on children by teenagers and young adults as well. In fact, a study in the year 2000 revealed that those who played violent video games immediately displayed signs of aggressive behavior and cognition . Another study found that, regardless of the age and gender of the player or the rating of a gaming title, violent content triggered aggression in players . This study showed that games that have been rated safe for everyone actually have a negative impact too and their impact is the same as games rates ' T' or for teens. This, combined with the prospect that most parents do not monitor the gaming titles being bought by their children, the youth is exposed to a

wide range of violence which they not only see but experience and participate in through games.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics “ Extensive research evidence indicates that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed” . Exposure to violence at young age makes children believe such behavior is not only acceptable but they consider it to be ‘ cool’ to use abusive language. Being exposed to such concepts and regularly viewing extreme violence desensitizes young minds and created confused ideas on what is ethically and socially acceptable behavior. In the face of the recent school shooting in Newtown, questions have been raised whether violent video games are providing mentally disturbed youngsters the opportunity to practice acts such as shooting innocents civilians, thereby desensitizing them and making them comfortable with carrying out such acts in real . However, video games do not have solely negative impacts on the youth. Video games can promote interests such as sports, role-playing, arts, music, action, problem-solving, and promotion of language skills. Games have proven to be effective in basic conceptual skills as well as physical skills such as dexterity, speed, coordination but also because games allow for learning social and cultural skills associated with language. In a meta-analysis of gaming theory and research, Van Eck suggests that “ games are effective not because of what they are, but because of what they embody and what learners are doing as they play a game” He goes on to discuss how when a student is playing a game, he or she is not simply playing, they are incorporating specific skills cognitively and physically that correspond with

their chosen game, and that “ games, clearly, make use of the principle of play as an instructional strategy.”

As various forms of digital environment continue to emerge, education pedagogy needs to keep up with learners’ affinity towards tech devices and ability to navigate a myriad of new digital literacies. Video games have become more than just entertainment, “ digital technology is rapidly becoming a primary carrier of information and that the broader means of expression this technology makes possible are now critical for education” . New literacies go beyond the ability to read and write as ‘ digital natives’ have developed skills. James Gee (2007) has led a game theory revival over the past decade to encourage the use of video games as a part of curricula in all school settings. Two major claims set the foundation for his hypothesis.

First, good video games have a solid foundation on learning principles.

Second, video game are more than entertaining, they promote learning in and outside of school in a myriad of ways. Gardner supports these claims by suggesting that video games allow players to see a virtual world where you can make mistakes, learn from them, and improve . Gardner also points out that some video games teach social and academic skills that can be applied to real-world situations. Gee (2007) continues to support his claims by stating “ Dialogue and experience are essential for people to be able to relate words to actual actions, since games are simulations of experience, they can situate language in specific contexts.”

Gee promotes the use of ‘ commercial’ video games available on the most common platforms such as PS3, Xbox, CPU, and Nintendo Wii, and is an

advocate for learning and enjoyment via these platform based teaching tools. The creativity and imagination associated with video games can and does promote learning and language acquisition because just as game theory was created to allow for collaboration and decision making, video games of various genres allow for all sorts of decision making in just about any context imaginable.

Whether in or outside the classroom, video games may serve as an influential medium of language and cultural acquisition, as Anderson et al. posit, “ Playing video games will prepare students for social participation . Along with interaction there are elements of scaffolding when considering video games for language acquisition. Gee argues that “ videogames are an ideal laboratory for studying learning principles because, as the games increase in complexity, game designers embed structures to help players learn them”. Motivation is another component of video games that is also present in various theories and themes. Gardner emphasized the role of attention and motivation, believing that a highly motivated student will enjoy learning and therefore want to learn . For various reasons players around the world are motivated to play video games.

In conclusion, it cannot be denied that video games do have an impact on the cognition and behavior of players, regardless of their age or gender. Research has proved that playing violent video games does induce aggressive behavior among participants. It has also been found that young children who play video games have blurred perceptions of social norms and can hence become desensitized to violence and crime if exposed to such games for a prolonged time. However, video games can also be used as an

effective learning tool. They can be used to boost language skills, enhance reflexes and eye hand coordination as well as motivate students to learn.

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